

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) An apparatus for coagulating tissue, comprising
~~an HF generator,~~
an electrode ~~connected to said HF generator and~~ adapted to produce a high-frequency current,

a gas-delivering device defining an outlet and adapted to deliver, in use, an inert gas from said outlet of said gas-delivering device into a space defined between said electrode and said tissue such that between said electrode and said tissue a plasma is produced, a distal end of said electrode projecting out of said gas-delivering device, and

a guiding device for directing and guiding at least one of said gas and said plasma disposed at said distal end of said electrode and adapted such that at least a part of said at least one of flowing gas and plasma is diverted in ~~into~~ a predetermined direction.

2. (Currently amended) The ~~[[A]]~~ apparatus according to ~~[[C]]~~ claim 1, wherein said guiding device is comprised of an electrically insulating material.

3. (Currently amended) The ~~[[A]]~~ apparatus according to ~~[[C]]~~ claim 1, wherein said guiding device is comprised of a thermally stable material.

4. (Currently amended) The ~~[[A]]~~ apparatus according to ~~[[C]]~~ claim 1, wherein ~~[[in]]~~ said guiding device is comprised of a ceramic material.

5. (Currently amended) The ~~[[A]]~~ apparatus according to ~~[[C]]~~ claim 1, wherein said electrode defines ~~[[is]]~~ a rod shape around which said guiding device is disposed ~~around~~ with axial symmetry such that said gas flows into said space substantially radially with respect to said outlet of said gas-delivering device.

6. (Currently amended) The ~~[[A]]~~ apparatus according to ~~[[C]]~~ claim 1, wherein said guiding device defines a concave configuration on a side thereof that faces said outlet.

7. (Currently amended) The [[A]] apparatus according to [[C]] claim 1, wherein said guiding device defines a rounded contour in order to prevent mechanical damage if it touches said tissue.

8. (Currently amended) The [[A]] apparatus according to [[C]] claim 1, wherein said electrode is movable relative to said outlet such that when said electrode is moved into a retracted position said guiding device closes said outlet in a substantially leakproof manner.

9. (New) An apparatus for coagulating tissue, comprising:

a gas-delivering device;

an electrode disposed substantially coaxially with the gas-delivering device and configured to generate a high-frequency current, wherein a distal end of the electrode projects outward through an outlet of the gas-delivering device; and

a guiding device disposed at the distal end of the electrode, wherein the guiding device is configured for guiding an inert gas stream flowing through the gas-delivering device or a plasma stream that guides the high-frequency current to the tissue.

10. (New) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the guiding device is disposed in an axially symmetric manner around the distal end of the electrode.

11. (New) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the guiding device is configured such that the inert gas stream or the plasma stream is guided into a surrounding space substantially radially with respect to the outlet of the gas delivering device.

12. (New) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the guiding device is shaped such that damage to the tissue is prevented if the guiding device touches the tissue.

13. (New) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the guiding device is spherical.

14. (New) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the guiding device comprises a concave surface at a surface facing the outlet of the gas-delivering device and a flattened surface at a

surface facing away from the outlet of the gas-delivering device and wherein a transitional region between the concave surface and the flattened surface has a rounded contour.

15. (New) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the guiding device comprises a concave surface at a surface facing the outlet of the gas-delivering device and a substantially hemispherical surface at a surface facing away from the outlet of the gas-delivering device.

16. (New) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the electrode is configured such that it may be retracted and pushed forward with respect to the gas-delivering device.

17. (New) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein when the electrode is in a fully retracted state, the guiding device is seated on the outlet of the gas-delivering device.

18. (New) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the guiding device is comprised of a material that is electrically insulating and thermally stable.

19. (New) The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the guiding device is comprised of a ceramic.

20. (New) An argon plasma coagulating probe assembly comprising:

a tube;

an electrode disposed substantially coaxially with the tube and configured to generate a high-frequency current, wherein a distal end of the electrode projects outward through an outlet of the tube; and

a guiding device disposed at the distal end of the electrode, wherein the guiding device is configured for guiding an inert gas stream flowing through the tube or a plasma stream that guides the high-frequency current to the tissue, and

wherein the guiding device is comprised of a ceramic material and is configured to have a concave configuration on a side thereof that faces the outlet and to have a rounded contour in order to prevent mechanical damage if it touches the tissue.